



11-13-2018

Winthrop Praised for Turning out the Student Vote

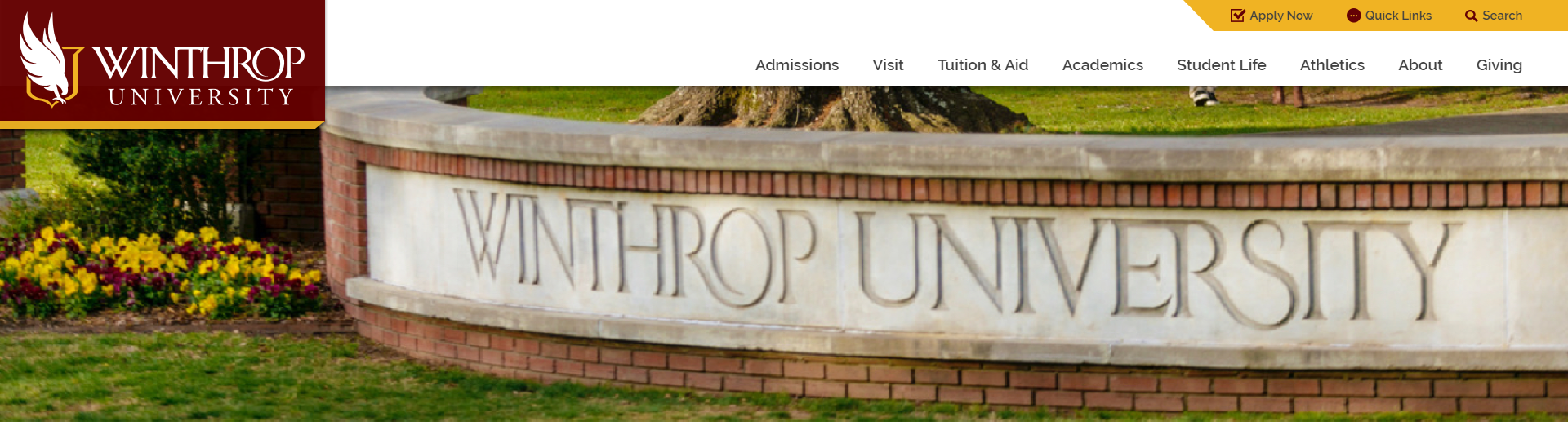
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Winthrop Praised for Turning out the Student Vote

November 13, 2018

HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2014, about one in five Winthrop students cast ballots (19.9 percent) and 58 percent voted in the 2016 presidential election.
- Normally young adults are not known for high voter turnout rates.

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA – Winthrop University was touted this month by **Washington Monthly** as one of several colleges that has been successful at getting students to vote.

Normally young adults are not known for high voter turnout rates. Just 16 percent of 18-24 year olds reported voting in the 2014 midterms, compared to 59 percent of adults ages 65-74, according to Washington Monthly. The gap was not much smaller in the 2016 presidential elections, with just 39 percent of 18-24 year olds reported voting compared to 70 percent of 65-74 year olds.

Karen Kedrowski, a Winthrop political science professor and director of the university's Center for Civic Engagement, said faculty, staff and students have teamed together to encourage participation in the midterm elections this month and two years earlier for the November presidential election. In 2014, about one in five Winthrop students cast ballots (19.9 percent) and 58 percent voted in the 2016 presidential election.

The university's voting team has trained Student Voting Ambassadors who in turn registered hundreds of students, handed out "check your voter registration" cards and flyers describing absentee voting. Campus clubs, organizations and academic departments have held dozens of election-related events over the past two years.

The idea is that teaching students to study the issues and to vote will become a lifetime habit, Kedrowski said.

Winthrop has participated in the **National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement** project since 2012 and is among more than 1,000 institutions to participate. Project researchers match student enrollment data with each state's voting records.

Winthrop's efforts have resulted in the university being designated in 2017 as a Voter Friendly Campus, one of only two in the state and 83 in the nation. And more recently, Winthrop's student voter turnout rate earned a Bronze Shield from the All In Campus Democracy Challenge.

For more information, contact **Judy Longshaw**, news and media services manager, at 803/984-0586 or longshawj@winthrop.edu.

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